

# This store manager has had enough

An entry for the **Competition: [Fiction Series] Word Bank 2**

Written by Knight Appius Wight

## Chapter 2

Unfortunately for the Sorcerer, after searching the Vizsla archives for what seemed like hours his efforts proved fruitless in trying to discover the identity and location of 'The Butcher.'

What he did discover during his time there were a few holonet pages detailing the various experiments committed by the man throughout the outer rim territories. Nothing he didn't already know from the detailed notebook he received from Blake back at Ebon Ridge, but he at least managed to narrow it down to *just* the outer rim. The largest collection on planets and stars in the known universe...

It seemed his target liked to move from place to place to avoid capture and drawing attention to himself. Ultimately, the Knights research led to a dead end. But Appius still had one lead to go on. Upon further examination of the notebook itself he spotted a location on the index page which listed a planet, city and store name where the notebook was sold.

So that brought him here, stood in the chilled rains of Arkanis that poured around them like an unending waterfall. Thankfully, his Armor was fitted with a Comfort Body Glove which kept most of the rainwater off his body. The planet itself was famed for being the location of the old Galactic Empires officer academy. It became a particularly wealthy planet under the New Republic after the defeat of the Empire and as a result business boomed. One such business was the 'Worded Scholar.' The store in which the notebook came from. If he was going to find anything it would be here.

"Lawrence, make sure to record everything in there, ok?" Appius said to his R3 astromech over the roar of thunder and the pitter-patter of raindrops that occurred around them.

The little astromech beeped at the Sorcerer causing Appius to pause and turn to it.

"What if there's trouble? I don't know. Act casual and stay out of sight?" Appius said with a coy smile though his response was met by a series of noises that came from the little Astromech. Appius stopped and turned to address the little droid once more, clearly not pleased at the little comments the droid was making.

"I heard that." Appius said in a matter of fact kind of tone.

But as the pair approached the shop a body was flung out of the door. The large framed being splashed into a nearby puddle before scrambling to his feet and running in the opposite direction as fast as he could. Out of the shop door appeared a disheveled white haired human man with a remarkably skinny frame.

"Thief! You are no customer of mine! Stay out of my sight you ugly sack of Hutt slime!" The white haired man said with a roar rather than any kind of yell Appius had ever heard of. Despite looking powerless, the man's voice carried a certain weight to it. He returned back into his store and slammed the door behind him. Appius approached cautiously and opened the store entrance. Lawrence entered first before he entered and let the door go. It seemed to magnetize as it closed behind them automatically.

It appeared to Vizsla's first Knight that they entered a time portal to a different era as there was barely a spec of technology in sight. Layer upon layer of wood and shelves held a collection of books that Appius had never seen or heard of before. The wooden flooring, whilst polished and clean, gave the room an old fashioned sense, like someone was living in the past and struggling to let go.

Against a nearby wall was a counter for customers to pay for their wares and but that was not what caught the Sorcerer's attention. The white haired man was sitting in a makeshift throne of sorts with his head in his hands, rubbing his temples. Appius approached the desk carefully and motioned to Lawrence to begin recording.

"Uh, hello?" The Sorcerer said in an attempt to garner the man's attention. Suddenly the shop owners head jolted up at him and staggered the young Force User a couple of steps.

"What do you want?" The man snapped, his brown eyes dilated and pierced like daggers into Appius' very being. He looked like a crazed convor owl. His eyes were horribly bloodshot and the skin on his face appeared dry despite the weather outside of the walls. The Knight took a quick breath and collected himself.

"I was hoping you could help me. I'm looking for the person who bought this." Appius said as he revealed the very notebook the store once possessed. He placed it gently on the desk and inched it towards who he assumed was the store owner or manager. The crazed looking man picked up the book with his right hand and glanced at both the cover and the back before throwing it back on the desk unceremoniously.

"Don't know, don't care. If you are not here to buy anything then get out. I have no time to waste on riff raff."

Those were not the words that Appius wanted to hear. A sudden sinking feeling began to form in his gut and he bit his bottom lip briefly before he gave his reply.

"Please. I had faith you might be able to tell me who bought this." Appius spoke, his tone deeper and softer than usual as he tried to convince the man to help him.

"By simply looking at it? You realise I run a *bookstore*. People come in day in and out to buy my wares. Literally anyone could have bought this thing." The man replied.

"But inside..."

"Is something I don't care to look at, now buy something or get out!"

Appius quickly grabbed the notebook of the desk and gave the white haired man one last look before he turned to leave.

"Come on, Lawrence. This was a bust." He said, downhearted he couldn't get the information he wanted. Appius tapped his mechanical companion on the head and made for the door before it was suddenly forced open by a short Togrutan male that walked by him. His face was mostly red with white markings that extended over his tendrils. He was soaking wet as a result of the heavy rain outside but barely seemed bothered by it.

The Sorcerer was about to leave and placed his hand on the door handle until something felt off in his surroundings. A cold feeling ran through his body and the atmosphere felt dense and hard. Like he could feel malicious intent.

And then he heard it. The sound of a single blaster bolt that jolted him back to reality followed by the deadly silence afterwards. He faced the direction of the offending noise to see both the Togrutan and the white haired man staring daggers at each other. A smoking blaster shot imprint burned into the wood behind the store manager.

"I've told you once, Kalek and I'll tell you a thousand times more. I don't need you or your gang to protect myself." The store owner shouted, his voice and tone confrontational as he refused to back down against the threatening Togrutan.

"Now, now, Thomas. There's no need to let your pride get in the way of good business is there? I could have easily shot you if I wanted to just now. With my gangs protection you never need to worry about a situation like this ever again! All I'm asking for is a little insurance cost." The Togrutan, now identified as Kalek spoke with such confidence that it came across as arrogance. He smiled at the shopkeeper and his sharp, yellow stained completed the intimidating look he was trying to perceive. To his credit, Thomas refused to budge and stared down the barrel of the blaster pointed at him with a spiteful intensity.

"Frack. You." He responded slowly, pronouncing each syllable carefully.

"Well, you are about to become a corpse, aren't you old man!" Kalek pulled back the trigger on his blaster though never got the chance to execute his intended victim. It felt like a black hole latched onto him as he was pulled backwards unexpectedly. He landed on his back and looked up to see the scowling face of the Sorcerer bearing down at him.

Kalem screamed, his grip on his blaster remained firm and as he pointed out straight up at Appius' forehead he squinted one eye to increase his accuracy.

That delay would prove to be the last mistake the Togrutan would make this day. The second he pointed the deadly weapon at the Sorcerer's face he was met by a surge of electricity that coursed through his body. His flesh burned and scorched as he writhed at the indescribable torment that overcame him.

Appius stood over the smoking body of Kalek moments later. His outstretched right hand stung a little from the torrent of lightning he just summoned. He knelt down to the Togrutan as the smell of charred flesh assaulted his nostrils and whilst the smell was something he could never get used too, he was reassured by the fact he could visibly see the Togrutan's chest moving up and down.

'*Good, he's still alive.*' The Knight mused to himself as he smiled. He didn't want to kill the man, just make sure he was of no threat any longer. Granted, Kalek was probably going to regret his life choices when he became conscious again.

"Are you ok?" The Sorcerer asked softly, not wanting to aggravate the store manager after the tense situation he was in. The response he got was a mixture of inaudible grunting which Appius could only deduce was Thomas's way of saying thank you. He was about to turn to leave until he saw the store owner hold out his hand to him.

"The notebook. Give it to me."

Appius didn't need to be told twice and retrieved the paperback from within his cloak and placed it back on the desk. Thomas picked it back up and very quickly scanned through the pages before placing it back down in front of him.

"Jemima Derago." He suddenly said.

"Who?" Appius asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Jemima Derago, a middle aged nautolan woman. She comes in regularly to purchase a notebook exactly like this one. I recognize her handwriting. Though that's not the only thing she's bought here." Thomas said as he suddenly stood up to retrieve another book from the shelf behind him. He threw it nonchalantly to the desk in front of Appius' eyes.

"A documented history of necromancy?" The Sorcerer asked.

"Judging from what I saw in that notebook of hers I would guess she's been trying to bring her victims back to life after she killed them. Perhaps she thinks of herself as a necromancer."

"Why?"

"How should I know?" Thomas responded, writing something down on a piece of paper.

"That's her address. I always make sure to take my customers details when they buy from me. Now, are we done here?" Thomas' voice was stern as he handed the piece of paper over to the Force user and to Appius' surprise It contained an address to the woman in question.

"Yes. Thank you. I'll be leaving now" Appius said as both he and Lawrence left the store behind he stopped at the smoking body of the Togrutan still laid in the hallway.

"Leave him, I'll throw him out into the rain when he's awake." Thomas called out to which Appius complied. After all, this wasn't his business to get involved in. Right now he had other priorities. The Sorcerer once again entered the harsh wetness of the Arkanis outdoors and looked once again to his mechanical companion.

"You got all of that didn't you Lawrence?"

The droid beeped in response and confirmed that he indeed recorded everything that happened inside. It would be useful information that they could call upon later.

A hardened expression then appeared on Appius' face. He now had the who, the what, the when and possibly why.

Now it was just a case of **how** he was going to deal with her.

**==END==**

**--- To be continued in Competition: [Fiction Series] Word Bank 3 ---**